

The Kings MAIESTIES Letter to the Lords  
Grace of Canterbury, touching Preaching,  
and Preachers.

**N**ost Reverend Father in God, Right trustie and right intirely  
beloved Councillour, Wee greet yee well. Forasmuch as the  
abuse and extravagancies of Preachers in the Pulpit, haue  
been at all times repressed in this Land by some Act of Coun- Realme  
cell or State, with the advise and resolution of Graue and Reverend Learned Prelates  
Preachers, insomuch as the very licensing of Preachers, had beginning by  
order in the Starre-Camber the eight day of July in the nineteenth year  
of King Henry the eight, Our Noble Predecessor: And whereas at  
this present diuers young Students, by reading of late Writers and un-  
grounded Divines, doe preach many times unprofitable, vnsatisfactory, & broach / run-  
gious, and dangerous doctrine, to the scandal of the Church, and disquieting of the State and present government: Wee, upon humble pre-  
sentation unto Vs of these inconueniencies by your selfe, and sundry  
other Graue and Reverend Prelates of this Churche, as of Our Privete,  
care and desire, for the extirpation of schism and dissencion growing from Zeal  
these secedes; and for the setting of a religious and peaceable gouernement  
both of Church and State, Doe by these Our special Letters straitly  
charge and command you, to use all possible care and diligence, that these  
limitations and cautions herewith sent you concerning Preachers, be due-  
ly and strictly from henceforth observed and put in practise, by the severall  
Bishops in their severall Diocesses within your jurisdiction. And to this  
end Our Pleasance is, that you send them forth Generall copies of these di-  
rections, to be by them speedily sent and communicated to every Parson  
Vicar and Curate, Lecturer and Minister, in every Cathedrall and Priory  
Churche within their severall Diocesses; and that ye earnestly require them  
to employ their utmost indeavours for the performance of this so import-  
ant busynesse: letting them know, we haue a speciall eye to their proceedings  
and expect a strict accompt therof both from you and euery of them.  
Our Letter shall be your sufficient warrant and discharge in this busynesse.  
Given under Our Signet at Our Castle of Windsor, the fourt  
of Junij anno 1509, in the twentieth year of Our Raigne of England  
to Irelond, and of Scotland the sixte and fiftith.

## Directions concerning Preachers.

**1** That no Preacher, vnder the degree and calling of a Bishop, or Deane of a Cathedrall or Collegiate Church, and they vp on the Kings dayes, and set Festivals, doe take occasion by the expounding of any text of Scripture whatsoeuer, to fall into any set discourse or Common-place ( otherwise then by opening the coherence and diuision of his Text ) which shall not be comprehended and warranted, in essence, substance and effect, or naturall inference, within some one of the Articles of Religion set forth 1562. or in some of the Homelies set forth by authoritie in the Church of England, not onely for a helpe for the preaching Ministers, and for their further instructions: for the performance hereof, that they forthwith peruse ouer, and read diligently the said Articles, or the two booke of Homilies.

**2** That no Parson, Vicar, Curate, or Lecturer, shall preach any Sermon or Collation vpon Sunday and Holy-dayes in the afternoon, in any Cathedrall or Parish Church throughout the Kingdome, but vpon some part of the Catechisme, or some text taken out of the Creed, tenne Commandements, or Lords Prayer, ( funerall Sermons onely excepted ) and that those Preachers be most encouraged and approued of, who spend these afternoone Exercises in examining the children in their Catechisme, and in expounding of the severall points and heads of the Catechisme, which is the most auncient and laudable custome of teaching in the Church of England.

**3** That no Preacher of what title soeuer, vnder the degree of a Bishop or Deane at the least, do from henceforth presume to preach in any populous auditorie, the deepe points of Predestination, Election, Reprobation; of the Vniuersalitie, Efficacie, Resistabilitie, or Resistabilitie of Gods grace, but leave those Theames to be handled by the learned men, and that moderately, and modestly, by waye and application, rather then by way of positiuе doctrine, being fitter for the Schooles and Vniuersities, then for simple auditories.

That no Preacher of what title or denomination soeuer, shall come from hence forth in any auditorie in this Kingdome, to limit, or bound out by positive doctrine, in any Lecture or Sermon,

Sermon, the Power, Prerogatiue, Iurisdiction, Authoritie, or Duty  
of Soueraigne Princes; or otherwise meddle with these matters of  
State, and the references betweene Princes and the People, then as  
they are instructed and presidened in the Homilie of obedience, and  
in the rest of the Homilies and Articles of Religion, set forth as is  
before mentioned by publike authoritie; but rather confine them-  
selves for those two heads, Faith and good Life, which are the sub-  
iect of auncient Sermons and Homilies.

5 That no Preacher of what title or denomination soever, shall  
causelssly, and without imitation from the Text, fall into bitter in-  
vectiues, and vndecent rayling speeches, against the persons of ei-  
ther Papist or Puritan, but modestly, and grauely when they are in-  
vited or occasioned thereunto by their text of Scripture, free both  
the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *England*, from the  
aspersion of either Aduersarie, especially where the auditorie is  
suspected to be tainted with the one or the other infection.

6 Lastly, the Archbishops and Bishops of this kingdome (whom  
his Maiestie hath good cause to blame for their former remisnes) be  
more warie and choice in licensing Preachers, and reuoke all grants  
made to any Chancellor, Officiall, or Commissary to ~~have~~ licence in this  
kind. And that all the Lectures throughout the kingdome (a new  
body seuered from the auncient Clergie of England, as beeing nei-  
ther Parson, Vicar, nor Curate) be licensed henceforth in the Court  
of faculties, onely vpon recommendation of the party from the Bi-  
shop of the Diocesse, vnder his hand and seale with a *Fiat* from the  
L. Archbish. of *Canterbury*, and a confirmation of the great seale of  
*England*: and that such as transgresse any of these directions, bee  
suspended by the L. Bish. of the Diocesse; in his default by the L.  
Archbish. of the prouince, *ab Officio & Beneficio*, for a yare and a  
day, untill his Maiestie by aduice of the next Convocation shall pre-  
cribe some further punishment.

# The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his letters to the Bishop of the Diocese of Norwich.

**M**y very good L. I doubt not but before this time, you haue received  
 from me, the directions of his most excellent Maiestie concerning  
 Preaching and Preachers, which are so graciouly set downe, that no godly or discrete man, can otherwise then acknowledge, that they doe  
 much tend to edification, if he doe not take them upon report, but doe per-  
 etually consider the tenor of the words as they lie; and doe not gine an  
 construction to that, which may receive a faire interpretation. Notwith-  
 standing, because some few Churchmen, and many of the people haue fau-  
 ily conceiued (as we doe here find,) that those Instructions doe tenre  
 the restraint of the exercise of preaching, and doe in some sort abuse the  
 number of Sermons, and so consequently by degrees, doe make a breach to  
 let in ignorance and superstition: His Maiestie in his Princely wisdome  
 hath thought fit, that I shoulde aduertise your Lordship of the graue and  
 maugry reasons which induce his Highnes to prescribe that which is done.  
 You are therefore to know, that his Maiestie beeing much troubled and  
 grieved at the heart, to haire every day of so many defectious from our  
 Religion, both to Popery and Anabaptisme, or other paintes of separation  
 in some parties of this Kingdome, and considering with much admiration,  
 what might be the cause thereof, especially in the Raigne of such a King,  
 who doth so constantly professe himselfe an open Aduersarie to the super-  
 stition of the one, and madnes of the other: His Princely wisdome could  
 fall upon no one greater probability then the lightnes, affectednes, and un-  
 profitablenesse of that kind of preaching, which hath beeene of late years  
 too much taken up in Court, Vniuersitie, Citie, and Country. The  
 small scope of very many Preachers is noted to be a soaring vp in points of  
 Divinity too high for the capacities of the people, or a mustering of much  
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 publike of the Kingdome: or a venting of their owne distastes, or a smoo-  
 thing up of those idle fancies, which in this blessed time of so long a peace,  
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least rayling, not onely against the doctrine (which when the text shall  
be known, the same is not onely approoued, but much commandedy by his rayall  
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people bred vp with this kind of teaching, and never instructed in the Ca-  
techisme and Fundamentall points of Religion, are for all this ayenr now  
abusement, no better then a false tabula, new-table booke ready to be fil-  
led vp, either with the Manualls or Catechisme of Popish Priests, or pa-  
pers and pamphlets of Anabaptists, Brownists, & Puritans. His Maiestie  
after calling to mind the saying of Tertullian, Id verum quod primum,  
and remembryng with what doctrine the Church of England in her first  
and most happie reformation, did drine out the one, and kept out the other  
from poisoning and infecting the people of this Kingdome, did finde that  
the whole scope of this doctrine is contained in the Articles of Religion,  
the two Bookes of Homilies, the lesse and the greater Catechisme, which  
his Maiestie doth therfore recommend againe in these directions, as the  
beamis & proper subiect of all sound and edifying Preaching. And so far  
are these directions from abating, that his M. doth expect from our hands,  
that it should increase the number of Sermons, by renewing upon every  
Sunday in the afternoone in all Parish Churches throughout the King-  
dome, the primitive and most profitable exposition of the Catechisme, wher-  
in the people, yea very children may be timely seasoned and instructed in  
the heads of Christian Religion. Which kind of teaching (to our amend-  
ment be it spoken) is more diligently obserued in all the reformed Churches  
of Europe, then of late it hath been here in England. I find his Maiestie +  
much moued with this neglect; & resolued, that if we which are his Bishops  
do not see a reformation hereof (which I trust we shall) to recommend it to  
the care of the Ciuell Magistrate, so far is he from gining the least discon- his highnes  
sideration to solid Preaching, and discrete and Religious Preachers.

To all these I am to adde, that it is his Maiesties Princely pleasure,  
that both the former directions, and these reasons of the same, bee farrily  
written in every Registers Office. To that end, that every Preacher of  
what denomination soever, may if he be pleased, take out copies of either  
of them with his owne hand gratis, paying nothing in the name of Fee, or  
expedition. But if he doe use the paines of the Register or his Clerks, then  
pay some moderate Fees, to be pronounced in open Court by the Chan-  
cellor and Commissaries of the place, taking the direction and appro-  
bation of any the Lords the Bishops.

Lastly, that from henceforth a course may be taken, that every Parson,  
Curate, or Chaplain, or Lector, due make exhibicione of these his Maiesties  
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